

Sample Annotated Passage—Middle Grades

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The passage below is from Karen Hesse's *Out of the Dust*. Remember that annotating is not just labeling the author's choices. You should always connect method (diction, imagery, details, figurative language, and syntax) to meaning (characterization, mood, tone, theme, purpose).

WHEN - summertime 1920

IMAGERY

Diction - farming; natural

Beginning: August 1920

As summer wheat came ripe full stage of growth so did I,

born at home, on the kitchen floor.

Ma crouched, barefoot, bare bottomed ? Diction - plain; poor

WHERE - home; farm

over the swept boards because that's where Daddy said it'd be best.

LOUD IMAGERY

Diction - Loud; intense

WHO - narrator; child (Billie Jo)

IMAGERY - crying loudly

I came too fast for the doctor, bawling as soon as Daddy wiped his hand around inside my mouth.

To hear Ma tell it, shouted loudly

I hollered myself red the day I was born.

Red's the color I've stayed ever since.

SYNTAX - short, simple sentences

Daddy is a simple farmer.

Daddy named me Billie Jo.

He wanted a boy.

Instead, he got a long-legged girl with a wide mouth and cheekbones like bicycle handles.

IMAGERY - red = passionate

WHO - Billie Jo

- long legs / slim
- red hair
- freckles

He got a redheaded, freckle-faced, narrow-hipped girl with a fondness for apples and a hunger for playing fierce piano.

wild; eager

Diction - passionate

LOUD IMAGERY

a liking; affection